Friend"; with the subservient, incompetent government; with the disintegrating army—its enlisted men distrusting their officers and both soldiers and officers distrusting the High Command; with the Church taken over by Rasputin's appointees; with the masses of the people despising the Tsar, his ministers, and his generals and distrusting the hand-picked Duma, Tsarist Russia was a crumbling tower.

MY MARRIAGE AND HONEYMOON

It was then that I met the girl who was to become my wife and lifelong companion. A friend invited me to greet the New Year with him and his wife. They had bought a box in the theater for the occasion. In the box I found myself beside a strikingly beautiful girl with enormous black eyes. We spent the intermissions chatting about nothing. After the theater my friend asked me, "How do you like her?"

I answered evasively, "So-so."

"If you think she is just so-so, you are a fool," he replied pointedly.

For the next three months she disappeared from my sight, but I often thought of her, the girl with the enormous black eyes and gentle voice. Then suddenly I met her by pure accident, again at the theater. This time I feared letting her vanish from my life. I saw her and her younger brother home from the theater and was very much disappointed that she did not invite me in. But as I was leaving, she called me back casually to say that she would be glad to see me again if I should have a free evening.

Next day I persuaded myself that this evening would be free. I telephoned the girl and spent several delightful hours with her. We knew very little about each other, but we talked as if we were old friends and had met after a long separation. This feeling of closeness to another person was unusual for me. On leaving, I forgot my briefcase (not unintentionally) and had an excellent pretext to see her again the next evening. This time I did not pretend to forget anything but left the briefcase in the entrance hall and said to Emma, "I shall pick it up tomorrow, at the same time."

All this was out of character for me. In addition, I realized how little I could offer the girl. I was a deportee engaged in political activities that promised me nothing but new troubles. Also, I looked older than my thirty years, and she was twenty-two but looked like a college girl of eighteen. Moreover, I suspected that I would not be the choice of Emma's mother. Nevertheless, a few days later I suggested to her that we try a game—a contest in earnestness—to look straight into each other's eyes and see who would lose by laughing first. She accepted the challenge and did not laugh, but it took her some time to